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that by his experience he is fully qualified for the right discharge of the duties of his office.

Counsel for plaintiff, Messrs. Holmes, Gilmore, and Perrin. Agents, Messrs. Ramsey & Garrett.

Counsel for defendant, Messrs. Dunn, Blacker, and Scriven. Agent, Mr Thomas Stewart.

The question in this business as to matter of fact certainly is, did the touch of Robert Tennent given in his usual manner without any violent expression constitute an assault? On this point it is understood that the jury, on their first retiring were divided nine to three, as to its not being an assault, and that one of the jury positively declared from a long personal acquaintance with the plaintiff, he knew that it was his manner, and that he did not consider such an act in him constituted an assault. Yet ultimately the jury concurred in bringing in a verdict for the defendant with 6d. costs, after an attempt at compromise to divide the costs, which the judge informed them was not within their province.

The great constitutional question re-

mains still at issue. Had not the inhabitants of Belfast a right to meet for the purpose of discussing proceedings by which the peace of their town had been materially disturbed? It is neither libellous, seditious, nor treasonable to doubt the infallibility of a judge, and the previous trials at Carrickfergus could only have reference to the guilt of the individual's who were tried, and not to the merits of the general important question which the inhabitants of Belfast met to consider, what measures were incumbent on them to take to free themselves from the danger of Orange processions disturbing the peace of their town. The resolutions did not censure the proceedings of any law court, but were calculated to discourage practices in future, which had so recently led to shocking outrages. In a free country, the people have more to do with the laws than merely to obey them. It is their right to watch over the administration of the laws, and to complain of grievances when they exist. According to Bentham, it is a duty "to obey punctually, and censure freely."

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## MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

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THE occurrences at the late Assizes in the South, especially in what is called the Leinster circuit, including the counties of Tipperary and Waterford in Munster, and of Kilkenny, Wexford, and Wicklow in Leinster, are far from confirming the statements recently made in Parliament of the general disturbed state of Ireland, as laying a pretext for the acts lately passed. By these acts, at which most of our Irish members connived by their absence, or promoted by their presence, the patronage of government is greatly increased by the powers granted to appoint police magistrates in proclaimed districts, while in these districts the offence of being out of the house after sunset and before sunrise without accounting for the

occupation of time, is punishable by transportation, without the intervention of trial by jury. It is preposterous to talk of our Irish outrages, without examining into the causes leading to them. It cannot be denied that many excesses have been committed by the unenlightened and ill instructed peasantry. But various causes contribute to produce this unhappy tendency to riot and disturbance. Many talk of English loyalty and English sobriety and contrast them with the state of Ireland. If it were not worse than useless to contrast vices for the purposes of extenuation, and thus lowering the general standard of moral rectitude, a large catalogue of English outrages might easily be enumerated, and the de-

fects of the English national character, might form a list equally as disgusting as those of the Irish. But far may it ever be from the pages of the Belfast Magazine to cherish national distinctions; but rather to promote the friendly emulation in both countries to run the race of virtue, while they mutually strive to remedy their own respective defects, and shun those of the other. One cause of our Irish disturbances may be fairly traced to the manner in which the peasantry are treated in most parts of Ireland, except in the north, where a better system of independence prevails. They do not receive that attention and respect, which the sturdy spirit of Englishmen forces from those of superior rank. Hence cunning supplies the place. The national character becomes vitiated, and the cringing slave of the day, is in turn the ferocious plunderer of the night. He is depressed below his proper rank,

"For man is man, and who is more?"

And seeks to retaliate for his abject state in the day, by the excesses of the night, when according to his mistaken notions, he takes his turn to rule, and commits acts of enormity, which cannot be justified, but which are magnified by the fears and prejudices of the aristocracy of the rich,\* who pass over with a total neglect of remembrance,

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\* Besides the exaggerations of fear, self-interest seeks to magnify the excesses of the peasantry. Many needy expectants desire to make a harvest of the rumour of disturbances. The venal prints are industrious to add to the delusions, which are indolently believed by many in England and Ireland, who will not take the trouble to inquire. A rumour of this kind has lately run its course through the English prints, nothing loath to lend it wings to fly. It appears to have originated first in the Dublin Journal, an inflam-

their own deeds of oppression, which operating on ignorance and aroused but smothered feelings, produce the train of evils exaggerated by them, and lamented by all good men who love their country, and are sincerely desirous for its peace and prosperity.

To show the real state of Ireland, the following extracts from Justice

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matory paper, but happily its desire to do mischief is limited by its very small circulation, and is scarcely known, except among a few bigots, with whom its attempts to create animosities find a congenial reception. Justice Fletcher in his charge at Wexford, thus relates the very slight occasion which existed, and was caught at, to spread rumours of the distracted state of the country.

"When I reached Waterford, I was still more surprized to see one Newspaper lamenting that I had been 'shot at;' but another protested, that it was all a gross falsehood. Now what was the truth? As I passed through Callan, an escort of a few dragoons attended me. This escort, by the bye, is one of the mischiefs of those alarms, a mischief which never occurs in England. *There*, the gentlemen of consideration in the county come out to meet the Judge, with led horses and equipages, and with every suitable mark of respect and attention, not, indeed, paid to the Judge individually, nor desired by him, but an attention and respect due to the law, which the Judge comes to administer. But what was the case in Kilkenny? The High Sheriff not appearing at all, perhaps, as a duty beneath him, or for some other reason; the Sub-Sheriff unwilling enough to be burdened with the trouble, and anxious to get rid of us, two or three miserable Bailiffs, mounted upon wretched little horses, brandishing an enormous length of halbert, resembling so many Cossacks in every thing but utility, and attended by an escort of four or five dragoons (for the Sheriff is not at the expence of paying for the dragoons.) Indeed, where needy or penurious High Sheriffs are nominated, and where the office of Sub-Sheriff becomes an affair of indirect management, an improper and inefficient attendance upon the Circuit Judges is generally to be expected. How-

Day's charge at Waterford, may eminently assist.

"But one may naturally ask, why such excesses, rarely, if ever, occur in Great Britain, an island in close juxtaposition, and under the same sky and latitude with our own? Why, because in that country, not only the laws, are strictly, promptly, and impartially enforced, but the feelings of the humble classes of society are liberally consulted, and their interests substantially and benevolently regarded. It is a libel upon human nature, to say, that the Irish peasant, is that ungovernable, untractable animal, which superficial observers have sometimes represented him. *Treat him only with a due mixture of conciliation and controul, and you will soon find, that you have discovered the true axiom and mystery of governing a people endowed with the warmest susceptibilities of nature.* On the one hand an ear ever open to their grievances, and an heart ever ready to redress them; on the other, a strict controul over their excesses, and an unbending execution of the law, without respect to religious sect or political party. Such a course would ensure a full ascendancy over the ardent and inflammable, but flexible and generous minds of the Irish peasantry. But it is idle and vain to rely upon new coercive statutes, numerous

barracks and military stations, or any other aid which a provident and vigorous government are willing to afford you. Such alone are but short lived puny palliatives. They may, for a season, assuage the storm and produce a temporary calm, but go not to the root of an evil, ever ready to sprout again and regenerate. On the contrary, it is a notorious and observable fact in the history of Ireland, that our troubles have increased in the direct ratio of the exasperation of our Criminal Code. It is in ourselves, after all; it is in a steady system of vigilance and energy, towards the humbler classes of society on the one hand, and a liberal policy, moderation of demand, and impartial justice towards them on the other, that we can hope to find a permanent and radical remedy, for an evil deeply rooted in the habits and propensities of the people."

Justice Fletcher, his associate on the Circuit, has, in his charge at Clonmell, also expressed judicious remarks on the internal state of Ireland, and has suitably reprehended the prevailing errors of Magistrates, both the supine, and the still more mischievous character, the meddling, outrageous, interested brawler for exclusive loyalty.

ever thus attended (or rather unattended) we drove through Callan; when a boy about seven years old, flung a stone idly, either at the Sub Sheriff, or at the dragoons, or both. This was the entire outrage. I did not hear of it, until long afterwards, when the newspaper paragraphs led me to the inquiry; but my servants are ready to vouch the fact upon oath.

"This story, with prodigious exaggeration, has been since officiously circulated throughout the empire, in order to shew, that this country is in such a state of disturbance, that the going Judge of Assize was pelted with stones, or shot at, and in imminent danger of his life. Can any instance more strongly illustrate the propriety, nay, even the necessity, of a full and unreserved statement of the true and actual condition of Ireland, than the extraordinary currency which this paltry fabrication has received, and the avidity with which it has been magnified into a momentous and alarming event?"

"He had often heard it sneeringly observed of the Irish character, that, contrary to all other countries, they had become more barbarous, as they increased in that wealth and those comforts which tended to civilize all the rest of the world. How the system of outrage, which took place among the lower orders here, was to be accounted for, he did not know. It could not be extenuated or justified any where, but in other places with which he was familiar, there were many natural causes, to which this unfortunate spirit of insubordination could naturally be referred. The severe and heavy burdens to which the peasantry are liable excited that irritation and ferocity against which the state of ignorance they are suffered to grovel in, without care or education, offers little correction to prevent a deluded people from exposing themselves to the punishment of those laws which they set at defiance; but this would much more seldom be the case, were they instructed in the great and necessary lesson, that the right of protection results from the duty of obedience; and that their burdens had

arisen with their prosperity; much was to be attributed to the enormous rise of lauds, occasioned by the deluge of paper money, and extraordinary calls occasioned by the war for all the produce of the earth, by which every article of the necessities of life increased so much in its value.

"He repeated that the prosperity of the country brought mischief to the peasant; after his landlord and his taxes, he had the clergyman and the proctor; the latter, who was paid with execrations for an agency, that was odious, and the former paid with reluctance by those to whom as a pastor, they looked for no spiritual comfort.

"In other counties, his Lordship said, he found also that a cause of murmurs and discontent arose from the conduct of the Clergy, not of the established church, looking for an increase of those voluntary contributions, from which they derived their only support; and in some of those places the lower orders have not been restrained from acts of violence to prevent exactions.

"But, if every man in the higher ranks of life would individually exert himself it would be easy to come at the root of all those evils, of which we complained. To effect this, the great and opulent land owner, instead of standing at his post ready at all times to support the laws of his country, and to promote its peace and prosperity should not desert that country to spend its produce in another, and leave his tenantry to the management of a griping agent, whose only object is, by misrepresentation and deception, to grasp all he can for the gratification of his own avarice.

"It is to men, such as he was addressing, that it particularly belonged, to have a close and watchful eye on the conduct of the magistracy, in the exercise of those powers, which in fact superseded the old constitution. They were on the spot, and could trace every mischief that arose from zeal and supineness. The latter was, in all cases, reprehensible and disgraceful: the former became baneful only when it brought on an over vigilance of power into action to administer to some private purpose; when men cram the jails with their miserable fellow creatures, merely to show the *extravagance of their loyalty*. Nothing, said his Lordship, can beget, amongst the multitude, a proper respect for the laws, more than the observa-

tion, *that the scales of justice are too steadily and firmly placed to be swayed by any little feelings of cabal or party*. But of the two descriptions of men, to whom he alluded, he did not know whether the apathy of the one or the vigilance of the other, was more criminal or mischievous.

"Unfortunately, said his Lordship, hitherto there has been a concurrence of too many causes to brutalize the Irish character, and we think ourselves justified in treating them as brutes. Instead of feeling surprize at finding them so wild, so thoughtless and so ungovernable as they are, the wonder seems to be, that their character is not worse."

At Wexford he entered more at large into the subjects of his former charge, and reiterated many of his former opinions. His remarks on the Orange system are peculiarly worthy of attention.

"In the next place, the country has seen a magistracy, over active in some instances, and quite supine in others. This circumstance has materially affected the administration of the laws in Ireland. In this respect, I have found that those societies, called ORANGE SOCIETIES, have produced most mischievous effects, and particularly in the North of Ireland. They poison the very fountains of justice; and even some magistrates, under their influence, have, in too many instances, violated their duty and their oaths. I do not hesitate to say, that ALL associations of every description in this country, whether of Orangemen or Ribbonmen, whether distinguished by the colour of Orange or of Green, *all combinations of persons, bound to each other by the obligation of an Oath, in a league for a common purpose, endangering the peace of the country, I pronounce them to be contrary to Law*. And should it ever come before me to decide upon the question, I shall not hesitate to send up bills of indictment to a grand jury against the individuals, members of such an association, wherever I can find the charge properly sustained. Of this I am certain, that so long as those associations are permitted to act in the lawless manner they do, there will be no tranquillity in this country, and particularly in the North of Ireland. There those disturbers of the public peace, who assume the name of *Orange Tomen*, frequent the fairs and markets, with arms in

their hands, under the pretence of self-defence, or of protecting the public peace, but with the lurking view of inviting the attacks from the Ribbonmen, confident, that, armed as they are, they must overcome defenceless opponents, and put them down. Murders have been repeatedly perpetrated upon such occasions; and, though legal prosecutions have ensued, yet, such have been the baneful consequences of those factious associations, that, under their influence, petty juries have declined (upon some occasions) to do their duty. These facts have fallen under my own view. It was sufficient to say; such a man displayed such a colour, to produce an utter disbelief of his testimony; or, when another has stood with his hand at the bar, the display of his party badge has mitigated the murder into manslaughter."

"Gentlemen, I do repeat, that these are my sentiments, not merely as an individual, but as a man discharging his judicial duty, I hope with firmness and integrity. With these Orange Associations I connect all commemorations and processions, producing embittering recollections, and inflicting wounds upon the feelings of others; and I do emphatically state it as my settled opinion, that, until those associations are effectually put down, and the arms taken from their hands, in vain will the North of Ireland expect tranquillity or peace."

"Gentlemen, I must further admonish you, if you are infested with any of the Orange or Green associations in this county, to discourage them; discourage all processions and commemorations connected with them, and you will promote the peace and concord of the country. But suffer them to prevail, and how can justice be administered? 'I am a loyal man,' says a witness, that is, 'Gentlemen of the petty jury, believe me, let me swear what I will.' When he swears he is a loyal man, he means, 'Gentlemen of the jury, forget your oaths and acquit the Orangeman.' A truly loyal man is one, who is attached to the constitution under which we live; and who respects and is governed by the laws, which impart more personal freedom, when properly administered, than any other code of laws in existence. If there are disturbances in the country, the truly loyal man endeavours to appease them. The truly loyal man is peaceful and quiet. He does his utmost to prevent commotion; and, if he cannot prevent it, he is at his post, ready to perform his duty in the day of peril. But what says the loyal man of another descrip-

tion, the mere pretender to loyalty? 'I am a loyal man, in times of tranquillity. I am attached to the present order of things, as far as I can get any good by it. I malign every man of a different opinion from those whom I serve. I bring my loyalty to market.' Such loyalty has borne higher or lower prices, according to the different periods of modern times. He exposes it to sale in open market, at all times, seeking continually for a purchaser."

"Such are the pretenders to loyalty, many of whom I have seen; and incalculable mischiefs they perpetrate. It is not their interest, that their country should be peaceful, their loyalty is a 'Sea of troubled waters.'"

An assertion was made in the report of Robert Tennent's suit, that the opinions of judges are not infallible, and that it is legal and constitutional to doubt at times of their validity, and to assert that the people have a right to meet to consider of their own interests, and that a chief magistrate cannot dissolve a meeting, merely on his suspicion of riot being intended, until some act of that kind takes place. If this position of the fallibility of judges required confirmation, we have it now in the contradictory expositions of law laid down from the bench. Justice Fletcher in express terms declares that Orange associations from their secret oaths, and appearing with the ensigns of a party are illegal, and are liable to prosecution. Another judge pronounces his opinion, that unless they appear with arms, no uncommon case with them, they cannot be prosecuted for their processions. Amid the clashing of jarring legal opinions, the plain principles of common sense and of unsophistical equity form a safe guide. Processions to irritate and intimidate, whether dressed in White, or in Orange, or in Green, or any other colour, if fresh distinctions should unhappily arise, are equally contrary to the spirit of the law, and no pitiful plea of loyalty, and no pretended exhibition of patriotic motives

founded on circumstances perverted from their original meaning, should be admitted as excuses for a continuance of insults which have disturbed, and which if permitted to go on, will still farther disturb the peace of the country.

No two principles can be more essentially distinct, than the rejoicing in the triumph of liberty, over arbitrary power, achieved in the name of William, by men zealous in the assertion of their rights, and the using of the name of William as a pretext for continuing restrictions on others, contrary to every principle of liberty. The present boasters of "the Immortal Memory," are mostly men characterized by a slavish adherence to arbitrary principles. Liberty is sometimes on their lips, but the despotic maxims of the Stuarts, under renovated but not improved forms, constitute the idol of their secret devotions.

At the assizes at Downpatrick, several trials came on before Baron McClelland, for outrages perpetrated by the factions, which disturb a considerable part of the large and populous county of Down. Candour compels the acknowledgment, that Orange societies, by their existence gave rise to the defensive bands of Thrashers. The Orange processions on the 12th, led directly to the attack at Crossgar on the son of E. S. Ruthven, in which the father so properly interfered to protect his son, and preserve the peace of the country, so shamefully and barefacedly outraged. They likewise led indirectly, to the riot at the race course near Downpatrick, on the 22nd, as the necessary consequence of irritation on one side, producing a disposition to riot on the other. The military are too hastily called in to support what the civil power, if properly exerted, is fully adequate to perform. A party

came with sticks prepared, perhaps to attack, but certainly to defend. If the magistrates had collected, it is most probable, that by exertions, they might have been able to preserve the peace, without doing any injury, instead of calling in the aid of the army to fire on a throng, leaving it to chance to direct the bullets, which in some cases struck persons unconcerned in the riot.

Not only on occasion of the processions, but at fairs and markets, and at all seasons of drunkenness, *these loyal men*, bellow forth their exclamations against the Catholics in the most vulgar terms of abuse. How frequently are our ears assailed with the drunken ebullitions of "these sons of Belial, flushed with insolence" and whiskey, and confident of protection, as the pay for their venal loyalty, "D—nn the Papists;" "Five pounds for the face of a Papist." are their usual exclamations. Can we expect but that these insults will raise up an antagonist spirit, and in return lay the foundation of feuds and quarrels? Let us ask our own hearts and inquire into the principles of our common nature, and we shall find how difficult it is to bear premeditated insults without being led into acts of retaliation. Such scenes as are now described are of common occurrence, and can we wonder that Thrashers will arise, and talk of Heretics in return? Let us have a common measure of equal justice to try all sides, and not partially condemn one side for acts, which we pass over in the other without pointed reprobation.

Baron McClelland in apportioning the sentences, with great propriety made the imprisonments long to those convicted on both sides. In the present instances severity was essentially just and necessary, to deter from the commission of

similar outrages, and as both sides were punished with strict impartiality, it is hoped the warning will be salutary. Rioters on both sides ought to be severely punished. Clan-nish riots are the disgrace of our country, and every honest man ought decidedly to discourage them, on whichever side they may be practised. They injure and debate a good cause, and are bad arguments indeed in favour of its justice. Truth is best proved by the force of reason, and not by the force of the cudgel. For the latter instrument may be employed as readily in support of a bad cause as of a good one; and is indeed more frequently employed in the service of a bad cause. If the cause is not originally bad, these tumultuary proceedings soon make it bad by the improper means used in its support. Let a good cause like that of civil and religious liberty be supported by good means worthy of it. We earnestly recommend a dignified and legal resistance to oppression. The advocates of illiberality are highly gratified, when they can goad on the unreflecting to acts of outrage. They consider themselves as entrenched within the pale of protection, and try to provoke their opponents to rush upon their fate. Disappoint them in their machinations, and let none in their opposition to the irritations of Orangemen, the greatest grievance of the north of Ireland, and the moving cause of all our riots and breaches of the peace, be drawn into a violation of the laws, or an imitation of the conduct of their opponents.

It is cause of regret that the maxims of prudence, are often lost on the unreflecting and ignorant part of the community. The habits of intoxication too frequent on all sides, lead many to commit acts, which

in their cooler moments they condemn. Baron McClelland says Protestants are more to blame than Catholics in the late scenes of rioting, which have disgraced the county of Down. The truth of the assertion is fully coincided with, although on different grounds. They are more highly culpable, because they were the first by their processions to disturb the peace of the country. Orangemen preceded the Thrashers, and even now, the continuance of their processions leads to the aggressions of the Thrashers, whose first movements were defensive, but as might be expected in the progress of human passions, they may now in their turn, have frequently degenerated into offensive operations. But on the supposition of the Judge, that Orangemen are more enlightened or possess greater moral principle, the position is more than doubtful. Without entering at all into the theological question, as to the merits of the respective systems of religion, leaving "graceless zealots to fight about modes of faith," it may be permitted to state, that in the present controversy, allowing for the difference of individual characters, and the various degrees of the moral sense, as actuated by the peculiar motives operating on different situations, Orangemen are generally the worst, not because their speculative tenets are inferior or superior, as these very seldom influence conduct, but because being strong in fancied protection, they have not the terror of the laws so fully before them, and this notion of impunity gives confidence to crimes. Interested cries are at all times dangerous, and lead to bad. Some of the worst of crimes have been perpetrated under the sanction of these cries. The present cry of loyalty is dangerous, for under this



name, much mischief is done. The writer once heard in a public assembly, a man declaim much in favour of loyalty, a bye-stander whispered "by loyalty he only means an attachment to his own interest."

With all the Orange outrages meeting us at every step, there is an astonishing apathy and indifference among many, who disapprove their proceedings. Yet these are ready to blame others, and complain that members of Parliament do not discharge their duty. Certainly the apathy of Lords and Commons, and great it is acknowledged to be, is not greater than that of many private individuals, but we are apt to censure others, and shift the blame off ourselves, though we may be equally deserving of it. The man who blames others and does not perform his own sphere of duty, is only deceiving himself and attempting to deceive others. This indifference is unpardonable, as not even Catholic Emancipation itself, would have so direct, and immediate a tendency to quiet the country, as the preventing of the public parades and insulting conduct of Orangemen. That portion of the press which aims to lay some claims to impartiality, through a culpable timidity often blinks the question. Orangeism is sometimes indirectly censured in oblique terms, as included under the general name of party spirit, though seldom or never in a full and direct manner. The state of the case calls for other more decided support to entitle to the character of impartiality. The Anti-Orange Petition was published in neither of the Belfast news papers. Reverse the picture, and what would be thought of a publication which always condemned Orangemen, and never ventured to place direct censure on Thrashers?

A low tone of public feeling pervades the community. The aristocrates, small in number, but persevering and vindictive in the pursuit of their objects, bully the majority who are inertly supine, and betray through a most blameable listlessness, their own and the public cause. If nine men, as it is reported to have happened on a late jury, yielded to the perseverance and false reasoning of three, because they had not firmness to oppose a bold front, we have only in their conduct a miniature picture of the present state of the public mind. The few triumph and vice bears sway, by reason of the general apathy, and indifference to the public weal. Important advantages arise from cordial co-operation. In the struggles for liberty about the commencement of the present reign, a public mind really existed. At present it is scarcely, or not at all to be found. Bingley when he refused to answer the interrogatories of Lord Mansfield in the King's Bench, was supported in prison by a public subscription. Other printers encouraged by the protection he received refused also to answer. The public cause thus triumphed. One honest man, John Horne Tooke, accomplished much, and made a virtuous stand so long as the people supported him. When they become divided and neglect their own interests, the cause is lost. The want of co-operation for virtuous purposes is greatly felt in the present crisis. Independence had its seat in England, but the times have changed. The interests of almost every family in the upper classes hang upon, or are interwoven with the will of the government, either by sons, sons-in-law, or other relatives holding places. The middling classes are likewise encumbered with the lower links of the same debasing chain. Thus

in despite of themselves the various ranks are losing that bold independence, which once was the characteristic of a Briton. Some assert that this class of Independents never were indigenous in Ireland, and therefore with us things are still worse. For a time the new men, whom commerce supplied to renovate the old stock had some of the spirit, which their former position on the democratic floor supplied, but these also have lost their energy, and are leavened into the general, shall it be said? putrid mass. The licensing system, and the pickings to be derived from government during a commercial warfare, enslaved them also, and insured their subserviency.

In the just distribution of censure, which ever ought to characterize the columns of a publication independent of all parties, it is impossible not to mark with disapprobation the late address of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland to the Pope. Consistently with the governing principle of this publication, we have nothing to do with theological tenets. Political grounds only afford subjects for animadversion. The adulatory language towards Britain, as the liberator of Europe, discovers the courtly turn of Churchmen, even previously to their own interests being secured. Charity ought to begin at home. Britain deserved no thanks, and Catholics ought to return none, till the work of Catholic emancipation be completed. Unmeaning adulation is the cant of the day, and Catholic Bishops partake in the epidemic of the times.

In the present sickly state of the public mind, it is the important duty of the conductors of the public press to speak a bold decided language, to place censure where censure is due, and in a just cause to persevere

in a fearlessness of giving offence, not seeking for a temporary popularity from a party, or fearing to injure the sale of their work by a bold avowal of truth, however it may offend. "Be just and fear not," ought not only to be the standing motto, but the influencing, guiding principle of the press; for otherwise what might be a great advantage to a country, becomes its bane. A free, fearless press is a blessing, but a tame, servile, and timid one becomes a curse. An inflexible adherence to principle, at whatever sacrifice, within the limits of prudence, can alone confer dignity on the press, as an important instrument of conveying sound sentiment.

The atrocious calumny in the *Sun*, London newspaper, on the Irish nation, was noticed in the last retrospect. A repetition of similar illiberal abuse was continued in its pages. It has been ignominiously and deservedly expelled from the Dublin Library, the Belfast Commercial News-Room, and the Limerick Commercial Bindings. The *Courier* if it continue its late course of abusing the Irish, will speedily be qualified, to be expelled in a like manner.

Important discussions on the liberty of the press have lately occupied the Chamber of Deputies in France. The advocates for despotism marshalled their arguments in favour of a previous censorship. Some of them were plausible, but not satisfactory. The case of England was alluded to by both sides, but in England and Ireland the press is not free. No censors examine previously to publication, but in cases of alleged libels, truth is not admitted to be a defence, and so long as a man cannot with safety publish the truth, the liberty of the press is but an empty name. In France a large

majority of the legislative body determined against the cause of freedom, and the proposal of the King to establish a censorship on the smaller publications, was agreed to with a trifling alteration as to the size of the works thus to be subjected, and a limitation of the duration of the law, which is to expire in 1816, unless it be previously renewed. The French having now chained the press, speak of exercising a similar power over the graver of the caricaturist. The weakness of a feeble trembling government, which is afraid of caricature prints, is thus evidently discovered. Such are the continual terrors with which despotism haunts its victims both among the rulers and the ruled.

The enemies of liberty rejoice in the present crisis, as if all the effects of the French revolution had ended in disappointment. Much permanent good yet remains, and it will be extremely difficult to cause the tree of despotism to take root again. Its roots have been loosened, not only in France, but generally through Europe. It is to be hoped it will yet fall, notwithstanding the present attempts to prop it. The greatest danger at present appears to lie in the military spirit, which a long protracted war has engendered both in France, as well as in Britain; the two countries, which although principals have felt less of its actual ravages. Other countries have felt more of the evils arising from being the seat of warfare, and are consequently tired of its horrors, which they have more practically felt. In France the false glare of military glory fascinates, and in the British isles, a sordid calculation of the commercial gains of war, and of the facilities afforded to provide for sons in the army, navy, &c. raises a powerful and clamorous body; with

whom the horrible monster of war has its charms. A renewal of war is to be dreaded at no very distant period. Britain has eminently suffered in pocket, and is badly able in finances to renew the contest. The taxes will afford a long and dreadful remembrance of the war. Materials for a fresh combustion are abundant in every state; mutual dissatisfactions and jealousies prevail not only between nation and nation, but between rulers and the people, notwithstanding the present deceitful calm. No one can tell how soon a casual spark from an unexpected quarter may cause an explosion among the combustible materials.

We hear much of the benefits of regular governments. These may be best appreciated by practical reference, and Spain affords a lamentable illustration. The Inquisition is to be restored, and all the abuses of the old government. The order to attempt again to rivet the chains of despotism, through the instrumentality of the Inquisition, affects to use the cant now so much in fashion. "The Inquisition," in the language put into the mouth of the *beloved*, but wretchedly feeble Ferdinand, "is to be rendered eminently useful to my subjects." To make the business more glaringly absurd, and to shew the apostacy from liberty in still more disgusting colours, the order is countersigned by Don Pedro Macanáz, the grandson of a man who passed the greater part of his life in prison, and died in exile for having written against the Inquisition.

Louis the XVIII. discovers all the imbecility which characterizes his dotage, and proves his incapacity to rule a people such as the French. The cloister would become him better than the throne. He revives the old festival of the dedication of

France to the Virgin Mary, as established by Louis the XIII. on the birth of his son Louis the XIV. who afterwards proved such a scourge to the world, and who could in no sense be considered as a favourite gift from heaven. But such is the vanity of princes, who attempt to lift every thing into importance, which relates to themselves. Louis the XVI. the foolish imbecile man, is to be canonized as a saint and a martyr. His defects, and his unfitness to rule, will nevertheless descend in the page of history, in the same manner as those of our Charles I. whom Protestantism adorned with the title of the Royal Martyr, and dedicated a day and a service to his memory, which the improving sense of the present times has laid aside.

The whole armory of despotism is again to be furnished up, and the order of the Jesuits is to be restored as the most effectual body guards of arbitrary power. Formerly they were powerful assistants in this cause. Now perhaps they will only may remain, and the power be happily wanting. Their finances, and their pompous establishment, which conferred real power are gone. Without them they will only have the mighty shade of their former name. Who shall again replant these trees? The advance of knowledge, so philosophically alluded to by Alexander of Russia, will, it is hoped, prevent their again taking root.

The inhabitants of London have long had their minds dissipated and debased by a repetition of raree shows and childish amusements. They followed the Emperor of Russia, and King of Prussia, Marshal Blücher, and Count Platoff, with an infantine curiosity. The puerile amusements in the park kept them aloof for a time longer, until at length disappointed in farther shows,

though feeling the emptiness of the nicknackery, they were inclined to break the childish rattle. After being a little unruly, and breaking and burning the paling at the park, they retired satiated perhaps, but not satisfied. Will the good citizens of London return again after all this dissipation to their former habits of industry, and forget the follies of the fetes? Or will a stain remain to lower their character, and give a hurtful bias to their habits in future?

At page 134 will be found among the Documents a plan for the reform of the codes of civil and criminal law. Reforms must have a beginning. This one is extremely necessary, and if followed up with prudence would be very salutary. But from the dread of innovation, and the difficulties which arrest Sir Samuel Romilly at every step of his progress in this cause, the probability of success at present is very faint.

The lovers of war have still a little of their favourite amusement in the continuance of the war with the United American States. The rancour manifested against the Americans appears very general, and in many instances proceeds from a deep rooted malignity of disposition. Their wish to dare to be free evinced in their war of independence, and a dread of their increased growth, so as to produce a stronger commercial rivalry, are among the causes which operate to produce this strong hostile feeling. While the war continues, commercial speculation finds an open for some of its favourite conjectures on articles of merchandise connected with America, and the gamblers at the stock exchange are amused, stimulated, and puzzled by the rumours from Ghent as to the progress of the negotiations, in their attempts to raise and fall the

prices of stocks, and in fixing with all due mysteriousness, and in the full spirit of gaming, the important point of the discount on omnium. These are some of the causes which contribute to make England a war-loving nation, notwithstanding the enormous debts and heavy taxation which await on an indulgence in this fatal and cruel propensity.

The unjust war of aggression by Sweden on Norway is commenced under the management of Bernadotte, who is patronised by the princes of Europe, after they have displaced his master and his pattern. A previous negotiation took place, in which the ministers of the allied powers bore a disgraceful part. The new King of Norway offered to resign, provided the Norwegians who conferred the power on him, inclined to compromise for present safety their rights, which have been disgracefully attacked by the men who talked so finely against aggression in the South of Europe. Alexander lends himself to this iniquitous scheme. If he be, as his admirers represent him, such an example of excellence in princes, the standard of moral rectitude must be very low which admits that he acts with consistency in encouraging Sweden in an unprincipled attack on Norway, while by restoring Finland, which he lately filched from Sweden, he might practically discourage the system of parcelling out countries to gratify the ambition of princes.

We hear much exultation at the glorious termination of the war, and that all the objects planned by the wisdom of William Pitt have been accomplished. The lovers of war have had their full share of the phantom of military glory. The commercial speculators have had their harvest. All have been gratified to nearly the full extent of their

extravagant wishes. What now is the result? An unsettled state of things on the Continent, approaching in no degree to permanent quiet: neither affording indemnity for the past, nor security for the future: at home an enormous load of taxation, pressing most severely on the comforts of the lower and middling classes of society, and seeming likely to produce permanent disadvantages, and insurmountable obstructions in the way of our future prosperity in trade, manufactures and commerce. These are the trophies of war, and the glories of the Pittite system.

In our next number a full report of Judge Fletcher's speech will be given. A subscription has been set on foot in Belfast and the neighbouring towns to print a very large edition of this excellent charge for general distribution through this country and especially in England, and to Members of both Houses of Parliament. Many people will be now disposed to listen to truths, often before disregarded, when they come to them recommended from the lips of a JUDGE. This important document is likely to produce a very good effect on the public mind, and to prove eminently serviceable in the great struggle which at present is making by legal means to repress Orange associations. It will serve to free Ireland from the calumnies of those, who for interested motives, delight in magnifying the irregularities of the peasantry without inquiring into the causes which have led to their excesses. K.

The Editor of the *Newry Telegraph*, continues his unexhaustible fund of Billingsgate language, which appears so congenial to his disposition. He may go on in future unanswered, whether once a month as usual, or twice a week, as he appears to threaten, or occasionally in

his vulgar lottery puffs, for he leaves no room for answer, as he deals not in argument, but in abuse. The question of depreciation will be occasionally canvassed in the Commercial Report, but without any reference to the editor of the Telegraph. He has intentionally involved himself in a mist on the subject of depreciation, in order to lead his readers away from the subject. No notice would now have been taken of him, if the in course of his last remarks he had not called in question the veracity of the Commercial Reporter under the cowardly subterfuge of denominating his manner of stating facts, as fiction; a flimsy substitute for a more gross expression. The Commercial Reporter indignantly repels the foul imputation, but is too proud in conscious rectitude to take farther notice of such ungentlemanlike conduct. He made no false assertion; he exposed the Editor's quibbling manner, and refused to be led by him into a tedious examination to find out what was his meaning, which he appeared desirous to keep in obscurity. But all his writing tends only to shew the man in his proper colours. Such throughout has been the aim in the Belfast Magazine to lead him to develop himself and his apostacy, from the cause

of liberality. The end is now accomplished, and no farther notice will be taken of him, unless he shall hereafter give occasion by his treating of public questions for the reprehension which it is the duty of a free press to inflict, and from the discharge of this duty, the writer of this article will not shrink.\* K.

\* In discharge of this duty, it may be proper to notice a paragraph, which lately appeared in the Telegraph. The writer with his characteristic witticism attempts to turn tragedy into farce. He relates a tale of a man wounded by a soldier, at the late riot near Downpatrick, a subject not very fit for merriment. The wretched people goaded by Orange insults, are more objects of pity than of blame. But he wished to display his talent at buffoonery, and at the same time to shew his smattering in anatomy. He talks familiarly of carneous, and clunicular and those terms calculated to make the vulgar stare. But he showed no compassion for a poor wounded man. Voltaire described a combination of want of feeling and vanity, by comparing such characters to a union of the tyger and the monkey.

#### CORRESPONDENCE ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

*To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

I OBSERVE the editor of the Newry Telegraph is very angry with you. He is one of the completest scolds in print, I have ever seen. How did you incur his deadly enmity? Is he angry at you for exposing his desertion of his former principles? and your talking of an editor, who acknowledged he had reduced himself to a mere machine like a spade, to make money for his employers? Is he only desirous from vanity to have "the last word," without considering whether it will be "the word, which lasts longest?" Or does he wish to frighten you by his abuse, his low wit, and his affected contempt for noticing his many political transgressions? I trust I have formed a just opinion of you, when I believe you will not be thus deterred from the dis-

charge of your bounden duty, as honest public writers, who wish to enlighten your countrymen, but that you will persevere in exposing his errors, as often as he shall give occasion. Abuse or undeserved censure recoils only on the rash assailer. In the panoply of conscious rectitude, you are safe from his most envenomed attacks, while he writhes under your merited chastisement. As he affects to express contempt for your Magazine, while he severely feels your reproofs, I shall conclude in the words of Young, in his epistle to Pope, as applicable on the present occasion, although in imitation of the editor of the Telegraph, I shall not borrow from my own poetry.

—"If like mine, or Codrus' were  
thy style,  
The blood of vipers had not stain'd thy  
file,